

Talbot County Tourism Board
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 12, 2017
8:30 a.m.
215 Bay Street, Conference Room #1, Easton, MD 21601

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Judy Bixler called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Board Members Present: Judy Bixler, Kelly Cox, Angela Eade, Ian Fleming, Tracy Johns, Dolores Jones, Harold Klinger, Al Silverstein, Laura Price, Cassandra Vanhooser and Kimberly Weller

Board Members Absent: John Booth, Jeff Schneider

Recording Secretary: Candace Harris

Visitors: Samuel Shoge, Ryan Snow

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the March 2017 meeting were presented. Al Silverstein moved that the minutes be accepted as written with necessary changes. Dolores Jones seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

III. Old Business

Restaurant Week Wrap Up: Ms. Vanhooser reported that the Launch Party event had low attendance this year. She felt that the low attendance could be attributed to the more prominent restaurants not participating and/or the weather because it was such a beautiful day. Ms. Vanhooser also said that several restaurants backed out at the last minute and did not show up on the actual day. Ms. Cox stated that she had a good experience with serving the oysters. Mr. Fleming commented that it was a good event and he saw a lot of new faces this year. He stated that he had been promoting it, but if the other restaurants don't buy in, it's a waste of time.

Ms. Vanhooser recommended exploring other options for the Launch Party. She recommended having Restaurant Week and run it as a true promotion. She also recommended that the Launch Party be morphed into a fundraiser for a hospitality scholarship in the May time period which will coincide with National Travel and Tourism Week. Ms. Eade stated that Kirkland Manor may donate the day for the event.

She also said that tent companies may donate their services. Ms. Vanhooser said that David Haynes mentioned he would like to do some type of chef-focused event. Mr. Silverstein thinks you need to talk to the restaurants to get their input. He said that Lauren Catterton mentioned that she would be happy to help talk to the restaurants. Ms. Bixler stated that if we got sponsorships we may be able to reimburse the restaurants who participate.

Ms. Vanhooser went over profit/loss statement. She commented that the numbers were not bad since we did bring in new people. She also suggested that we get our date for next year by August. She stated that she invited Ms. Linda Brown from the Culinary Arts program at the high school and she was very impressed.

Town Listening Session: Mr. Shoge reported that the Listening Session in Oxford was well attended. He said the comments were good from the residents and town officials. Oxford has some of the same problems as the other towns, such as wanting more tourism and the lack of human capital. He said that the Business Community would like to be discovered while still maintaining Oxford's unique assets. Ms. Vanhooser mentioned that the 2018 World Star Boat races were coming to Oxford. Ms. Bixler mentioned that the Ferry opens on April 15, 2017, and the Blessing of the Ferry is next Friday.

Ms. Vanhooser mentioned that Trappe wants more bicyclists and kayakers. She said they have a real asset in the Bill Burton Fishing State Park because they are the only town that has a state park. She said that Nace's Park is opening on April 29, 2017, at 10 a.m. She said that they have a pretty main street, and it is the 150th anniversary of the Nace's Day Parade. Mr. Shoge mentioned that Trappe has shown an interest in starting a business alliance.

He stated that the next meeting will be held in St. Michaels on May 4. After these sessions the Economic Development and Tourism Department will be compiling everything into a strategic plan. The goal is to have this finished by the end of summer.

IV. New Business

Business Appreciation Breakfast: Ms. Vanhooser reported that the Business Appreciation Breakfast will be on April 21 at 8 a.m. at The Milestone. A number of businesses will be recognized for their community impact. The keynote speaker will be Lt. Governor Boyd Rutherford. Mr. Silverstein asked if you could pay at the door. Ms. Vanhooser answered yes.

National Travel & Tourism Week: Ms. Vanhooser reported that National Travel and Tourism Week is the second full week in May. She said that the Bay Country Welcome Center on Route 301 is having a celebration on May 11 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. They are inviting their tourism partners to come and set up a table to showcase your tourism information. Ms. Vanhooser recommended instead of having a cocktail party as in previous years, we refocus our efforts on the Bay Country Welcome Center celebration.

Golf Tournament: Ms. Vanhooser asked the Board their opinion on if we should continue to have the golf tournament. Mr. Silverstein stated that he felt it was not a good use of the Tourism staff's time. He suggested having a get together on the Patriot or something of that nature. Ms. Johns motioned to cancel the golf tournament this year and Ms. Eades seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Silverstein suggested having a FAM tour for front line workers. Ms. Eades agreed she mentioned that some of her guests have mentioned that the front line people don't know anything.

V. Town Reports

Representatives from each of the towns reported on news and events taking place in their jurisdictions.

VI. Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, May 10, 2017, at 8:30 a.m.

X. Adjournment

Ms. Bixler thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Tracey Johns motioned for adjournment and Ms. Cox seconded. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35 a.m.